

THE ORGANIZER

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One Day in July Festival a Success

On Saturday, July 25th, union members and supporters from around the Twin Cities turned out to celebrate the victories and honor the past of the labor movement. The One Day in July festival, put on by a group of unionists and sponsored by a variety of unions, was held to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1934 trucker's strike in Minneapolis. With music and good company all day long, the union movement celebrated its proud history.

The event, sponsored by a variety of labor and political organizations including the Twin Cities IWW, AFSCME Locals 34 and 3800, UTU Local 650, and Mayday Books, was held in the Warehouse District, where most of the events of the 1934 strike took place. The afternoon was dotted with rain, but local acts like 2 Tone Runts and City on the Make kept the energy up throughout gray skies. Speakers from different unions and organizations spoke. Members from CWA, representing workers at AT&T, spoke about their struggle to renegotiate a new contract. An organizer from the UAW spoke about the effects of the economic crisis on autoworkers and the need for organization.

In a particularly moving moment, Gladys McKenzie spoke about the two men who lost their lives in July of 1934 right around the corner from the festival site. She called for a moment of silence as a brass band and vintage car from the era moved forward and two Teamsters removed a wreath commemorating the fallen unionists. The band then began a chorus of Solidarity Forever, the old IWW song often called the anthem of the labor movement.

As the day proceeded, festival-goers saw the skies clear up and the afternoon become beautiful. The Brass Kings got the crowd's feet stomping to their folk rhythms and Mic Crenshaw laid down rhymes about working class life. In a delightful surprise, two shop stewards from UE who work at Republic Windows, whose sit-down strike fascinated the nation last winter,



Photo: Nate Weber

showed up to talk about their struggle and victory. Speaker Kieran Knutson of the IWW gave a spirited speech about the need for workers in all industries and in all situations to organize. The crowd cheered as he encouraged everyone who works and is exploited to join a union and better their lives. Finally, the night was topped off by a fantastic performance by nationally-known rapper Brother Ali, who got everyone at One Day in July on their feet and with their hands in the air.

By all accounts, the festival was a huge success. Jeff Pilacinski, one of the members of the organizing committee and an IWW member, reflected on the day positively. "This festival not only honors the sacrifice and struggles of those who came before us, but it's also

meant to inspire today's working people towards change by means of self-activity, direct action, and solidarity - the foundation of the 1934 truckers strikes," he said. One Day in July brought out hundreds of union members and supporters, showing everyone that a successful festival for workers can be put on by workers and in order to celebrate workers. Pilacinski summed up the day nicely: "It's clear that the spirit of our class is strong and very much alive in the Mill City."

— FW John O'Reilly

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THE ORGANIZER

A monthly publication of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW is a union for all workers, dedicated to organizing on the job for better conditions today, and a world without bosses tomorrow.

You are invited to contact the Branch Secretary-Treasurer or any Delegate listed below for no-pressure conversations about your issues on the job.

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Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are not necessarily the official position of the local branch or the union as a whole.

Many of our members are engaged in active organizing campaigns, and some use an alias, occasionally their union card number, or 'x' number. We prefer transparency over secrecy whenever possible, but will always honor requests for anonymity.

Editorial



Cartoon: J. Pierce

Greetings IWW members, friends of the union, and folks who just picked up the paper! There are a few changes in the content of the Organizer this month. First, we are entering a period of transition. Our former editor Errico Hedake is stepping back from the project and I will be taking the lead for the next few months. I personally want to thank Errico for all the hard work he has put into the Organizer over time. He has done a wonderful job producing a newspaper centered on the working class, our struggles and our ideas. This paper would not exist still without his guidance and never-ending support.

Second, the process of how the paper runs is changing. At the June meeting of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch, members voted to change our bylaws to have the Organizer Editorial Committee become an elected group of at least three members to serve a term of one year. Any member in good standing can run in this election and it is hoped that even members who do not serve on the Editorial Committee will volunteer to assist the production of the paper. This paper, like the whole union, is volunteer-run, which means that we need your help to make it happen. If you are interested in working for the Organizer, please contact our email address at tc-organizer@

riseup.net. If you would like to be part of the Editorial Committee, elections will be held at the same time other branch officer positions are held, the GMB meeting on November 3rd.

For those who don't know, the Organizer is named after another paper, a strike bulletin from the Minneapolis trucker's strike of 1934, which marks its 70th anniversary this year. The One Day in July Festival, a day-long street festival sponsored by the IWW and other unions that celebrates the legacy of this strike was held on July 25th and was a success. It is often said that the trucker's strike made Minneapolis, and before long, St. Paul, union towns. Today more than ever we need large struggles like the 1934 strike to remake the cities we live in and to rebuild the labor movement. We need a labor movement that is democratic, strong, and has a vision for the future. I hope that the Organizer serves as a small part of this powerful idea, providing coverage and analysis of working class issues that escape the big corporate papers and their profit-motive. If you have feedback, ideas, or just something to say about how we run this paper, please send us an email.

— FW John O'Reilly

UFCW Organizing at Local Wal-Mart

Wal-Mart usually ranks near the top on the list of Fortune Magazine's most admired companies. But, as most of us know, Wal-Mart's predatory corporate practices extract a high cost from communities and workers.

For several years the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has been attempting to organize Wal-Mart employees. This has led to some occasional short-term success stories. Hopes were high when two stores in Quebec, where labor laws are more worker-friendly than in the rest of North America, voted to organize. Wal-Mart dealt with the situation by permanently closing both stores.

Emboldened by the election of Barrack Obama and the **continued on page 4**

Struggle at AT&T Continues

Heading into the 17th week without a contract, Wobbly dual-card members of the Communications Workers of America at AT&T are attempting to maintain the solidarity needed to defend their benefits. Despite billions in profits last year, and again in the first quarter this year, AT&T is still demanding sharp concessions in employees' healthcare coverage in addition to other areas.

For their part, dual-carders have helped lead the CWA contract campaign at the rank-and-file level. IWW members have been among the main workers encouraging mobilization actions on the floor. For more than two months, workers on three floors at the AT&T Tower in downtown Minneapolis stood in their cubicles every hour and pressed "clickers" or other noisemakers as a loud and visible show of force. Wobblies strongly encouraged the CWA to call, and then helped organize, worker marches around the office floors – including up to 60 workers at once.

IWWers have continued to try to instill a sense of solidarity and struggle with their co-workers, mediating disputes that arise between workers in this tense atmosphere, and elaborating about the "big picture" importance of this struggle.

Recently, in a break of unity, the Midwest District (comprised of the old Ameritech) of CWA settled with AT&T, taking some concessions. This follows the earlier settling of the AT&T Wireless group. The IWW opposes capitulating to AT&T's divide and conquer negotiating. Solidarity unionism, based on rank-and-file democracy, direct action, and fighting to win is what is needed going forward today and in the future.

– FW x359209

Starbucks Campaign Poised for Growth

National Strategy Retreat Helps Set Direction

After 5 years, the Starbucks organizing campaign is still going strong. What began in New York City, through a number of growth spurts and set backs, is publicly active in New York, the Twin Cities, Grand Rapids, Chicago, and Quebec City, with more organizing in a number of other cities.

Here in the Twin Cities, the campaign is about to reach the one year mark for public organizing.

Over the past year, Starbucks workers in Minneapolis have had to fight hard simply for the right to organize, and are currently winning that fight. Workers have focused on getting out to stores often to reach out to workers and to let them and bosses know our rights. That has not all happened without a number of Unfair Labor Practice charges against the company though. The Union recently won a settlement with Starbucks requiring the company to put up a National Labor Relations Board posting in almost twenty stores about workers' right to organize. "The posting has helped," says campaign member Angel Gardner, "but the most important thing remains visiting stores regularly and talking to them about their rights. The company can't be trusted not to lie, exaggerate, and manipulate its workers into thinking that they can't organize a union".

In recent months, the campaign has focused on the basics of organizing - one on ones, phone calls, and other outreach - to consolidate its contacts and momentum and prepare for more big direct actions. "One thing I've definitely learned is the importance of the basics, of being organized in our organizing," says Gardner. "We have to have a clear strategy and execute on all the

simple things. This translates to all aspects of organizing, from networking, and actions, to research and legal strategy. You have to have all the basics in place, and preparations well lined up."

The Minneapolis Starbucks Workers recently hosted a national strategy retreat for the campaign to help execute on the basics and set a clear direction moving forward. Workers from several cities nationwide came to the

Twin Cities to, set up bylaws to help with execution of all campaign activity, and discuss their vision. "The campaign now has a much more clear, cohesive structure."

Says Gardner, "This will really help us get the job done and continue to grow."

Some of that growth is already being seen, as workers from Quebec City just recently joined the campaign and filed for union recognition at one store. Of the store in Quebec, and the campaign's general direction, Gardner said, "Starbucks should watch out. There will be plenty more of that to come."

– SWU Twin Cities



Where To Begin?

A Primer

It seems to me that we have long since passed the time where we can allow ourselves to sit and moan about how horribly unjust the world is, and how little we are able to do anything about it. Instead let us ask, "What do we need to take on such tasks? How do we create an actual process for transforming the present?" Such a move is a serious one, and can be frightening. Gone is happy criticism, replaced by practical questions of how to build or take power and be responsible for what we do and the type of power we are building.

Gone also is the attractive option of irrelevance, in whatever form. Most typical of so-called radical organizations is "ultraleftism": being more invested in appearing radical than having radical impacts. And little is more disappointing than seeing such projects choose irrelevance for no reason at all.

Another common form of irrelevance is individualism of the sort that says "We are all doing the best we can and deserve to live well". While working joyful and sustainably are ideals worth striving for, it is foolish to believe that doing so alone will have the results we want. And little is more depressing than people in nonprofits or the academy killing themselves over work that ultimately goes nowhere.

Beginning requires us to ask different types of questions and to follow the conclusions like a dog to its dope.

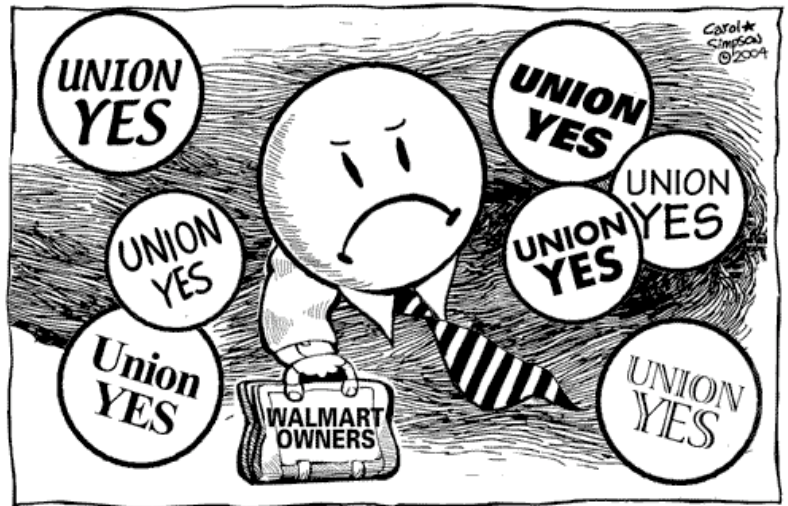
- What are the most important struggles and work being done right now, in the Twin Cities, nationally, and internationally? Why is this work the most important, and what would it take to win such struggles?
- What infrastructure do we need to win and how do we prioritize our energy to create such infrastructures or take over and transform existing organizations for that purpose?
- What are core principals that bring us together and goals that will get us from one critical mass level to another? How can we push for these goals and principals without demanding excessive unity or being captured into reactionary coalitions?

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that the process itself should make us powerful, not only win short-term gains. So where then, to begin? Let me end this little incitement with a quote that inspires us to try:

Trying to [dream]...is an extremely difficult task, yet it is a matter of great urgency. Without new visions we don't know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics but a process that can and must transform us.

— Robin Kelly, *Freedom Dreams*

— FW b



Wal-Mart, from page 3
assumed passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), the UFCW embarked on a fifteen-city campaign to organize Wal-Mart workers. UFCW Local 789, which serves the eastern portion of the Minneapolis-St Paul metro area, was chosen as one of the locals to press the organizing drive.

The Wal-Mart store located in the Midway district of St Paul was the first urban Wal-Mart in Minnesota, and one of the first inner-city stores in the country. A group of workers in this store have begun an extensive organizing campaign which has spread to several other Wal-Mart locations throughout the metro area. Several weeks ago, UFCW 789 filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) claim against Wal-Mart, alleging that the company was illegally interfering with organizing efforts at the Midway store. Unfortunately, the ULP claim had to be withdrawn when Wal-Mart was successful in their efforts to intimidate employees from testifying. In spite of this setback, the union is still close to filing for an NLRB election.

There can be no doubt that a majority of Wal-Mart workers are in favor of organizing. The real question is whether or not they can maintain their courage and solidarity in the face of the ultimate corporate giant. Wal-Mart is the shining example of how to bust a union and how to control its workers. They are the corporation that smaller companies look to in determining the state of worker-corporate relations.

Breaking through Wal-Mart's anti-union wall will benefit every worker in the country simply by showing it can be done!

As Wobblies, we have an understandable mistrust of business unions and their often-undemocratic practices. But this isn't about the union, it's about the workers. These workers are getting their first taste of empowerment, and what they need more than anything is the support of other workers—the knowledge that they are not alone in their fight.

— FW Bob Adams

Organizing Tip

We have nothing in common with them as a class but sometimes we need to talk to our bosses. When we confront our bosses, for instance, we need to talk to them. A lot of bosses seem to have an instinct for turning the tables on us, and a lot of us workers have a habit of letting them do so. We spend so much time following their orders and they spend so much time giving orders that when we speak up it can be almost as disorienting for us as it is for them. That can make it easy for the boss to take back control in conversation.

For us to keep control in conversation with the boss we need to know what we want to have happen. We can't get our way if we don't know what our way is. If we don't have a plan then things can't go according to plan.

Let's say we're going to confront a boss about making someone stay late. Here are some ways the boss might respond: justify the decision ("we had more work, someone had to do it"), bring up some other issue ("well, you all are out of uniform"), try to guilt you in some way ("you do this after I got you that nice coffee maker for the break room?"), bring up the way you raised the issue ("you shouldn't bring this up in a group"), point you to someone else or somewhere else ("you should bring this up at our team meeting," "you really should go through Human Resources"), or question your right to bring it up at all ("this is a private matter between me and that person, it's none of

the rest of your business.") There are other possible responses. The point is, you should think about the different ways your boss will respond, and know how you will reply in each case.

The goal in replying to a boss's response is to come back to your issue and your goal. Don't get side-tracked. Don't argue. At most, acknowledge what they said, ("we appreciate the new coffee maker", "we tried to bring this up with HR"), but don't let them turn the conversation to be about that. State your issue again, and what you want. "You make us work late and it causes problems for us. Will you stop that?" If they keep bringing up other things, and they probably will, say "This isn't about that, we're here to talk about you making us work late." Then re-state your issue and what you want.

The over all point is that our issue and our demand are not up for discussion. We are not going

to be talked out of feeling like a problem at work is a pain in the neck and we are not going to be talked into having our demand disregarded. We are making clear that the issue is a problem and we are presenting our demand to fix it. If you have to, just say "we're not here to debate with you or to discuss other things. We want to know if you will stop extending people's hours or not. That's all we want to talk about. Will you stop?" Stick to the script and you can turn the tables on the boss.

— FW Nate Holdren

Editors' Note:

This is the first in an ongoing series of organizing tips, to be brought to you monthly by Fellow Workers in the IWW. Many members of the One Big Union have invaluable practical experience in on-the-job organizing, and we hope to share a bit of it with you in each forthcoming issue. So stay tuned!

Members' Corner

Delegates' Convention and Our Union's Democratic Process

Every September over the Labor Day holiday, members of the IWW get together to make decisions about the future of our union. For the first time in many years, the IWW will be holding a Delegate Convention this September 4-6 in Chicago. What does the change in our yearly assembly mean for you as a dues-paying Wobbly?

Formerly, the IWW internationally made decisions by having a General Assembly, where any member in good standing could attend and vote on issues. This structure worked for the middle of the century, when the union was smaller. With our renewed growth in the 1990s, the General Assembly began losing its effectiveness. Whenever the GA was held, members from nearby areas or who could afford to travel had more say than those who could not get there. At 2008's General Assembly in London, the first held outside of North America and an important step forward for the international union, members voted to change our decision-making process to a Delegate Convention, where branches elect delegates to send to the assembly and instruct them on

how to vote on issues. Later that year, the membership at large ratified that decision and it was decided that this year's meeting in Chicago would be made up of delegates from branches.

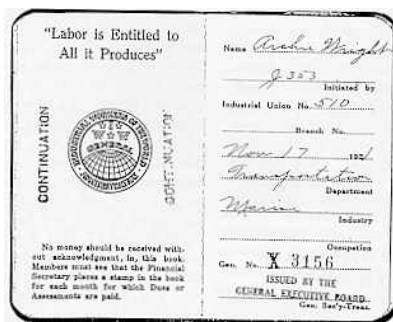
What does this mean for you? General Secretary-Treasurer Chris Lytle in Cincinnati says that it is important for members to keep informed about the issues going before the convention. "Every-

body should read their GOB [General Organizing Bulletin, our internal discussion forum] and keep up to speed with what is going on. Branches should make sure that they have their reports filed and squared away," he suggests. FW Lytle reports that there are over 20 delegates as of right now, and that a few more credentials will be issued as branches get their reports sent in to General

Headquarters before the August 15th deadline.

In the Twin Cities, our branch will elect at least one delegate to represent the branch's viewpoints on issues and give them instructions on how to vote at the Convention. But if you are not the delegate that does not mean that you should stop paying attention after you vote at August's meeting. Member of the General Executive Board, Jay Krpan from Chicago, encourages all IWW members to try and get to the Convention. "All the proposals sent to the Convention get taken care of over the weekend, but the relationships made with members you'll meet from other branches—and other countries—are what lasts and build the union."

Around the union, many people are excited about the possibilities
continued on next page



Members' Corner, from page 5

that the Delegate Convention will bring to the IWW. GST Lytle hopes the convention will make the union more democratic. "I'm hoping that having branches elect their delegates and send a mandate is going to incorporate a lot more member's opinions."

Bottom line:

- Read your GOB and familiarize yourself with the issues
- Attend August's GMB meeting to vote on the issues
- Consider going to Chicago to connect with other Wobblies

Starbucks Union Condemns Company Doubling Health Insurance Costs

Starbucks, amid massive profits, announced on Monday, August 3rd that it will slash at employee health care benefits. The company announced that premiums for its most economical employee health care package will nearly double, along with across the board increases in out-of-pocket expenses. This slap in the face to workers comes just one week after the announcement of \$256 million in profits for the quarter, far exceeding internal and Wall Street expectations.

These cuts are an insult to Starbucks workers, and the thousands of workers who have been laid off in the last year. The increased costs of health benefits will be a barrier to many workers thinking of enrolling, forcing them to make the hard decision between health care coverage and feeding their families.

We expect more from Starbucks as a leading Fortune 500 company that builds its brand image on its treatment of its "partners", what it calls employees. Starbucks has a responsibility to provide affordable, quality healthcare to its workers, who are responsible for its enormous profits. Instead, Starbucks continues to use health care benefits as a marketing tool, while actually covering a lower percentage of its workforce than the notoriously unethical Wal-Mart.

Starbucks has repeatedly shown that it cannot be trusted to compensate us fairly. We believe as workers we must organize together to hold Starbucks accountable, and give us the respect and dignity we deserve.

— Starbucks Workers Union

Having trouble at work?
Worried about job security?
Having trouble paying the rent?

Join the IWW!



Fight for better conditions and better wages.

Build workplace power and put pressure on the boss to get what you want.

Learn more or join today! Contact us at twincities@iww.org or call 651-315-4222.



Upcoming Events.

General Membership Branch Meeting

September 1 at 7 PM Monthly business meeting for the IWW Twin Cities General membership Branch. Come vote on where your dues are spent! All members have a vote. Mayday Books, 301 Cedar Ave.

Branch Strategy and Visioning Retreat Weekend of

Sept. 25th Yearly planning meeting to be held at a campsite in the historic Mesabi Iron Range. Contact a BST or delegate if you would like to RSVP.

The Twin Cities branch of the IWW hold Organizer Trainings once per month on average. Here, workers learn invaluable skills with which to reach out to, organize with, and empower their coworkers. If you are interested in attending a training, please contact Jake at jake.b.bell@gmail.com to find out when the next one is.

Organizing is a daunting task; we can help you prepare.